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FASTER MECHANIZATION OF FREIGHT HANDLING IN TRANSPORT

The postwar Five-Year Plan envisions a considerable increase in the use of mechanized equipment for loading and unloading work in transport. Accordingly, many branches of Soviet transport have received various cargo-handling machines and installations in the last few years.

On the railroads, the total number of cranes, which reduce labor costs 8-10 times in comparison with the cost of manual labor, already exceeded the prewar total by 40 percent in the past year. The stock of gantry and semigantry cranes available to the merchant marine was almost twice as great as the prewar stock; the 1947 stock of jib cranes was 4.5 times that of 1940; and the stock of electric trucks was 3 times as great. The increase in quantity and the more efficient use of freight-handling equipment on the railroads made it possible to handle 15 percent more freight in the past year than in 1940.

The results achieved in these fields, however, cannot be considered satisfactory. In the first place, the assignments for mechanization of freight handling are not being adequately executed in many branches of the transportation system. Therefore, cars and ships are tied up, and the turnover speed is reduced. Transport workers must increase the tempo of mechanization of heavy work and thus accelerate the operation of rolling stock.

In this respect, the Moscow railroad junction is an example of achievement. In 1947, the scheduled 30 percent increase in mechanized loading and unloading operations at this junction was exceeded. Much has been accomplished by enterprises on their privately operated tracks.

The Stalin Auto Plant built a gantry in the st[illegible] shop, and erected bunkers for supplying coal to locomotives [illegible] cranes; and performed a whole series of operations which [illegible]sation. As a result of these measures, at the end of 1947, the auto plant had exceeded the degree of mechanization planned for 1948. The workers of the

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Serp i Molot Metallurgical Plant mechanized 75 percent of the freight operations in 1947 instead of the scheduled 60 percent.

The primary goal of all branches of the national economy is the mechanization of heavy and labor-consuming operations. Yet, not all the managers of our enterprises which handle large amounts of freight act like those of the auto plants and the Serp i Molot Plant. The Krasnyy Bogatyr Plant of the Ministry of Rubber Industry was to have constructed ramps and bunkers to accommodate ten cars for unloading coal. In addition, the plant was to have mechanized the unloading of gasoline and oil. None of this work was done, and such results as were achieved were deplorable. Mechanization of freight operations, which should have reached 25 percent in 1947, remained at a level of 2 percent.

At the Derbenevsk Plant of the Ministry of Chemical Industry, only 5 percent of the freight was handled mechanically. Until recently, all loading and unloading operations at the Moscow Plant for Nonferrous Metals, under the Ministry of Nonferrous Metallurgy, were accomplished manually.

The managements of Krasnyy Bogatyr, the Derbenevsk Chemical Plant, and the other enterprises which are lagging in their mechanization should take lessons from such giants as ZIS and Serp i Molot, and should learn how the Krasnopresnensk Refinery attained 100 percent mechanization in handling freight.

The directors of many enterprises are still paying enormous fines to the railroads for unjustified demurrage of cars, and the main administrations and ministries tolerate this situation. In an article published in this magazine, Comrade Dubrovin stresses the fact that the amount of fines paid is enough to build 5,000 cranes or a freight-handling gantry 300 kilometers long.

To avoid fines and to accelerate the turnover cycle of cars, enterprises must organize their tracks and build the simplest machinery gantries, and bunkers. Special efforts must be made by the forestry, the nonferrous metals and the various building [illegible], etc., which are behind schedule in mechanizing freight operations. In forestry, only 8 percent of the wood is loaded mechanically.

In addition to the lack of machinery, there is an inefficient use of the available machinery. Hundreds of Rutkhov-type devices were unused, or used to a negligible extent. Industry and transport must mechanize the entire cycle of freight operations, without exception. There are sufficient stocks of machinery for this purpose. It is necessary, however, to use the machinery efficiently and with coordination.

An experiment by A. Blidman, an expert in mechanization of river transport, proved that efficient use of machinery does increase the mechanization of freight operations. Last year, in organizing the unloading of bauxite from a large number of ships in the Zaporozh'ye river port, Comrade Blidman used such equipment as basket conveyors (originally designed for wheat), grab buckets, and regular conveyors. In Krasnoarmeysk, he organized coal loading by coordinating the use of machinery.

The Stakhanovites of the Maritime Fleet are discovering and exploiting possibilities of accelerating freight operations. During the last year, 78 percent of the freight in seaports was handled by mechanical means and 20 percent of the freight was handled by accelerated methods. A wide application of these successful methods is planned for 1948. The results would be even better, were it not for the slow operation of bunkers, the lack of organization of services outside the port area, and the delays in loading cars.

The complexity of mechanizing such freight operations is evident. Ships must be loaded and unloaded quickly, and sailing speeds must be increased. As a rule, traffic must be regular, and all large-tonnage, bulk and even ordinary freight must be shipped on regular lines. Thus, operations will be improved and demurrage decreased.

In river transportation, over 60 percent of all freight is handled at customers' wharves. Though freight operations are 63.3 percent mechanized in river ports, at the wharves of industrial enterprises there is only 20 percent mechanization. This figure must be raised by the means available to such enterprises.

The Ministry of Maritime Fleet sets a good example. During the past year, its shops produced 100 movable belt conveyors, over 200 clamshells, buckets, and 50 grab buckets. Various gripping devices were produced in the shops of the port of Leningrad, and the gantry cranes in this port are now being modernized.

The Ministry of Heavy Machine Building which has a main administration in charge of hoisting and transportation machinery, has the primary responsibility for producing the basic machinery for handling freight. But the Administration for Hoisting and Transportation Machinery is extremely backward. It has such poor organization that the assembly-line method has not yet been applied. In the fourth quarter of 1947, the Ministry of Heavy Machine Building was to have delivered two gantry cranes, each with a 10-ton lifting capacity, to the Ministry of Transportation. At the end of the first quarter of 1948, these cranes had not yet been produced.

Organization must be stressed in the various phases of operations [illegible] handling freight. Every enterprise has at its [illegible] tools and the production potential necessary for [illegible] machines. As an example, the Krasnoye [illegible] has the means to produce dozens of various machines. However, the [illegible] ministries and factories in charge of making machines [illegible] more complex machinery is not eliminated as a result of the initiative of individual enterprises. Assembly-line production can and must be organized.

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